



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

News Release

Pacific Islands External Affairs Office

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Conservation Funds Strengthen Ties Between Hunters and Conservationists

Hawaiian hunters and conservationists do not always agree when it comes to effectively using and managing the state's natural resources. However, thanks to the Hawai'i ESA Community Conservation Initiative (HECCI) ties between these two diverse groups have been strengthened. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently distributed \$687,904 to implement habitat restoration and protection actions across the State of Hawai'i.

This unique Service program, designed to engage landowners and community groups in the implementation of conservation actions to benefit endangered and threatened (listed) species, reduces conflicts between hunting programs and endangered species conservation. Since 2002, nearly \$2.8M in funding has gone to reduce conflicts between game mammal management and endangered species conservation. The Service is providing funding for 15 projects selected in 2005.

"Private partnerships are some of the most effective management tools currently being used by the Service," said Patrick Leonard, field supervisor for the Fish and Wildlife Service's Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office. "It is only with community involvement that we can hope to conserve Hawai'i's many endangered and threatened species."

The Service received 20 project proposals. Personnel from the Service and State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources worked together to verify that submitted proposals met basic HECCI requirements. The Service then ranked and selected the project proposals to be funded looking for projects that enhance public hunting opportunities, populations of listed species, or benefit both game and listed species, such as wildland fire prevention.

"Management of game populations are often difficult because they eat, trample, and degrade native habitats shared with endangered and threatened species," said Benton Pang, fish and wildlife biologist with the Service's conservation partnerships program. "This program helps hunters realize that endangered and threatened species recovery benefits everyone, and in the long run means less regulation and more flexibility."

Several projects cited by Pang as prime examples of how funded projects benefit both hunters and conservationists include: a two-year community hunting program of ungulates in lower Lumaha'i Valley on Kaua'i, and the development of a strategy and plan to eradicate the remaining Axis deer within a 230-acre enclosure at Pu'u O Kālī on Maui. The Pu'u O Kālī site harbors several endangered species, cultural sites, and protects the largest remaining Williwili forest in the state.

For more information, contact Benton Pang at 808/792-9440 or by electronic mail at Benton_pang@fws.gov.

2005 HECCI Projects

Project	Cooperator	Amount	Description
Lāna'i Hunting Initiative-Phase III: 2005-2006	Lāna'i Institute for the Environment (L.I.F.E.)	\$50,000	Road improvements on East Lāna'i for ungulate control/eradication, hunter education, and botanical surveys. This is the 3rd year of funding for this multi-phased project.
Community Hunting Program for Resource Management in Lumaha'i Valley, Kaua'i.	Waipā Foundation	\$83,500	Two-year community hunting program to control ungulates in lower Lumaha'i Valley.
Kohala Mountains Watershed Partnership Public Scoping	Kohala Mountains Watershed Partnership	\$15,000	Funding to expand community and hunter outreach as part of the public scoping process for Kohala Mountains Watershed Partnership environmental assessment.
Boundary Survey of Kā'ū Forest Reserve and Kahuku Ranch.	'Ōla'a Kīlauea Partnership	\$10,000	Survey and recommendations for potential fencing strategies along the boundary between the Kā'ū Forest Reserve and Kahuku Ranch.
Threat Reduction in the East Maui Watershed	East Maui Watershed Partnership/ Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit-University of Hawai'i	\$35,154	Continuation of proposed ungulate fencing and hunter outreach in East Maui Watershed.
Kūlani Pasture Reforestation and Habitat Enhancement	'Ōla'a Kīlauea Partnership	\$100,000	Inmate education, agroforestry, forest restoration and Nēnē habitat enhancement on 600 acres of forest at Kūlani Correctional Facility.
Feral Cattle Hunt	State Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW)	\$29,850	Assistance to DOFAW managed feral cattle hunting program and infrastructure (access, roads, check-in stations) within Hilo Forest Reserve.

Project	Cooperator	Amount	Description
Kahakuloa NAR/GMA fencing project	West Maui Watershed Partnership	\$80,000	Strategic ungulate fencing along Kahakuloa Natural Area Reserve and Game Management Area.
Leeward Haleakalā Project Coordinator	Leeward Haleakalā Watershed Partnership	\$23,000	Coordinator position to assist with development of management plan, fundraising, and communication with all partners.
Axis Deer Removal at Pu‘u O Kālī	Leeward Haleakalā Watershed Partnership	\$20,000	Strategy and plan development to remove remaining axis deer within 230 acre exclosure at Pu‘u O Kālī, leeward Haleakalā.
Preventing the Extinction of Hawaii’s Rarest Plants	State Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW)	\$23,000	Funding to match DOFAW’s support for a part-time genetic safety net botanist.
Ungulate Assessment	State Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW)	\$15,000	Review and assessment of ungulate control methods used by the State of Hawaii.
Wai‘eli Habitat Restoration Project	The Nature Conservancy/US Army	\$67,800	Habitat restoration at Wai‘eli through expansion of Army fence at Pu‘u Hāpapa Wai‘anae, O‘ahu. Funds will be matched by US Army.
Pu‘uanahulu Fuelbreak Maintenance Project	State Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW)	\$67,800	Solicitation of bids to maintain nearly 30 mi of fuel breaks at Pu‘uanahulu originally cleared in 2002, including the ‘Owēowē plant exclosure.
Habitat Restoration at Kona Hema Preserve	The Nature Conservancy	\$67,800	Year 1 of a 3-year forest restoration project to prepare areas for potential ‘alalā release. Includes endangered plant collection, propagation, and restoration.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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